

Pollution Prevention Practices for **Conference Centers**

www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen/conferencecenters.html



Conference centers do business with a wide range of customers for a wide range of events. Even if an event is not focused on an environmental theme, there are individuals who care about the environment in every group. In addition, corporations and other organizations are increasingly developing environmental policies and statements of “corporate responsibility” that apply to everything they do, including expenditures on conferences.

Luckily, conference centers can minimize their impacts on the environment by adopting measures that are often simple and practical – and almost all of the ideas listed here can save your facility money! Take a few minutes to go through the items on this checklist and indicate any of the methods that you are already utilizing. Let us know what you are doing, and we will help you let your customers know about the good things you are already doing for the environment. They don't need to know that you're saving money at the same time!

To Join – 3 Easy Steps

- 1) **Fill Out This Application.** Email or mail the completed checklist to Virginia DEQ at the addresses below. If you are doing the “**core activities**” and you work with or for the tourism industry, then you qualify for *Virginia Green - it's that easy!*
- 2) **Virginia Green Profile.** We will then draft a “profile” on your facility from the information that you submit to us. Once you have approved of the profile, you will officially be a *Virginia Green facility*, and your profile will go on our website and be searchable through the Virginia green tourism website: www.viriniagreentravel.org.
- 3) **Promote Yourself as Virginia Green.** We will send you a certificate and window decals for display and encourage you to use the logo on your website, signage, and any printed materials.

Core Activities: These are the minimum requirements for all *Virginia Green Conference Center Participants*

We Pledge that we: (click or mark (X) the box next to the techniques that your facility uses)

- ☐ **Recycle and Reduce Waste.** All conference centers must provide for recycling at their events. Aluminum can and plastic bottle recycling are a must. Recycling of steel cans, cardboard, office paper, and composting of waste foods are encouraged as well.
- ☐ **Eliminate the use of Styrofoam and minimize disposables.** Conference centers are encouraged to eliminate or minimize the use of Styrofoam-based products and to use alternative disposables that are made of natural products and/or are bio-degradable.
- ☐ **Use Water Efficiently.** Conference centers must have a plan for conserving and using water efficiently. This plan should begin with tracking water usage and consider water-savings faucets and fixtures and an effective landscape watering plan.
- ☐ **Conserve Energy.** Conference centers must have a plan in place to reduce overall energy consumption. The plan should consider replacing lighting and equipment with energy-efficient alternatives such as compact-fluorescent lighting, LED Exit signs, lighting sensors, efficient heating and cooling, and ENERGY STAR kitchen appliances and computers.

☐ **Green Events Package.** Conference centers must offer a “green” or “environmentally-friendly” package for conferences, meetings, and other events. At a minimum, Attractions should be able to provide recycling at such events and be willing to work with “environmentally-aware” customers on other techniques to reduce wastes. For lots of ideas on Green Events, please see the fact-sheet on Environmentally-Responsible Conferences, Meetings, and Events at www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/lodging/eventplanning.html.

Details about your green activities! Please tell us more about the great things you are doing. We will include these in your website profile. You can also use this list to get ideas of green techniques you may not have thought of.

Recycling – we pledge that we recycle:

- ☐ Glass
- ☐ **Aluminum Cans (required for Virginia Green Conference Centers)**
- ☐ **Plastic (required for Virginia Green Conference Centers)**
- ☐ Office Paper
- ☐ Toner cartridges
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Cardboard
- ☐ Packing Supplies
- ☐ Fluorescent Lamps (required by RCRA law)
- ☐ Batteries (required by RCRA law for NiCad and Lead-Acid)
- ☐ Electronics equipment – computers, etc (required by RCRA law)
- ☐ OTHER specifics related to Recycling:

☐ Please identify your recycling vendor (the company that takes your recyclables):

☐ Clearly marked recycling bins or drop off locations are provided for guests. Please indicate how your guests are able to recycle (for example: recycling cans in rooms, collection bin in lobby, recycling bins in parking lot).

Waste Reduction – we pledge that we:

- ☐ Track overall waste bills
- ☐ Have numeric goal to reduce overall materials that go to the landfill
kitchen (or meetings/events)
- ☐ Donate excess food from events
- ☐ Compost food waste and other compostables
- ☐ Have an effective food inventory control to minimize waste
- ☐ Purchase locally grown produce and other foods
- ☐ Purchase organic and/or “sustainably-grown” foods (<http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues>)
dining room (or meetings/events)
- ☐ Use reusable dishware and glassware & minimize use of disposables
- ☐ Use non-bleached napkins and coffee filters
- ☐ Provide condiments, cream and sugar, etc. in bulk
- ☐ Use water pitches and filtered water to minimize the use of single-use bottles
- ☐ Use menus and table placards as opportunity to communicate green activities:
 - ☐ Print menus on recycled content paper with soy-based inks and include recycling symbols, recycled-content, and message about soy-based inks on printed material
 - ☐ Use Virginia Green logo to indicate organic, local or sustainable menu choices
- ☐ Use screen-based ordering systems
restrooms
- ☐ Use bulk soap dispensers in public restrooms

- ☐ Use high-efficiency hand-dryers
- ☐ Purchase recycled-content paper-towels and toilet paper
- office/purchasing
- ☐ Use a last-in/first-out inventory & effective labeling systems
- ☐ Encourage suppliers to minimize packaging and other waste materials
- ☐ Purchase from vendors and service providers with a commitment to the environment
- ☐ Make 2-sided copies / printed materials
- ☐ Use electronic correspondence and forms
- building and grounds
- ☐ Using "green" Cleaners (www.greenseal.org) that are dispensed in bulk
- ☐ Purchase durable equipment and furniture
- ☐ Purchase low-VOC carpets and fabrics
- ☐ Use reused building materials or those from sustainable sources
- ☐ Use latex paints that are ☐ low-VOC
- ☐ Re-use paint thinners
- ☐ Properly recycle and/or disposal of thinners and solvents (required by EPA-RCRA)
- ☐ Perform preventative maintenance on all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- ☐ Use less toxic materials
- ☐ Use "integrated pest management" (IPM) - www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm
- ☐ Minimize use of pesticides and herbicides in landscaping
- ☐ Use a nutrient management plan that minimizes the use of fertilizers in landscaping
- ☐ OTHER specifics related to Waste Reduction:

Styrofoam elimination/ reduction of disposables – we pledge that we:

- ☐ Do not use any disposable containers
- ☐ Use disposable containers that are:
 - ☐ Made from bio-based materials
 - ☐ Made from recycled content paper
 - ☐ Compostable
 - ☐ Recyclable
- ☐ OTHER specifics related to your Styrofoam elimination efforts:

Water Conservation – we pledge that we:

- ☐ Track overall water usage and wastewater
- ☐ Have a numeric goal to reduce water consumption over time
- ☐ Perform preventative maintenance to stop drips and leaks
- ☐ Use water-flow metering to discover leaks and areas of high use
- ☐ Have: ☐ high efficiency dishwashers, ☐ low flow restrictors on faucets and showerheads, ☐ Low flow toilets, ☐ waterless urinals, ☐ composting toilets, ☐ automatic faucets or toilets in public restrooms.
- ☐ Discourage water-based cleanup (sweep first) and ☐ use microfiber technology mops
- ☐ Have an effective landscape management plan which ☐ utilizes drought tolerant species, ☐ metering and rain gauges, and/or ☐ minimizes lawn areas.
- ☐ Have an effective storm water management plan including: ☐ rain gardens (www.dof.virginia.gov/rfb/rain-gardens.shtml), ☐ pervious pavement, and/or ☐ minimization of impervious areas (paving, concrete, etc)
- ☐ Have a green roof (www.greenroofs.com)
- ☐ Use cisterns, ☐ rain barrels (www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/stormwater.htm), and/or ☐ drip line irrigation
- ☐ Maintain vegetative buffers around streams and ponds
- ☐ OTHER specifics related to Water Conservation & Efficiency:

Energy Efficiency – we pledge that we:

- ☐ Track overall energy bills
- ☐ Have had an energy audit to identify efficiency opportunities
- ☐ Have a numeric goal to reduce energy usage over time
- ☐ Have an “energy management system” in place to track and meter energy usage
- ☐ Calculate the pollution factor of our energy usage by using a pollution calculator, such as www.cleanerandgreener.org/resources/pollutioncalculator.htm
- ☐ Have evaluated existing ovens and other kitchen equipment for energy efficiency
- ☐ Have considered upgrading to an Energy Star Commercial Kitchen Package: www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=commercial_food_service.commercial_food_service
- ☐ Use:
 - ☐ High efficiency compact fluorescent light bulbs in all rooms and in canned lighting
 - ☐ LED Exit Signs -- www.energystar.gov/ia/business/small_business/led_exitsigns_techsheet.pdf
 - ☐ High efficiency fluorescent ballasts and lamps (T-5's & T-8's)
 - ☐ Ceiling fans
- ☐ Have a high efficiency heating & air conditioning (HVAC) system
- ☐ Perform preventative maintenance on HVAC system
- ☐ Have geothermal heating and cooling
- ☐ Have individual thermostats for each room
- ☐ Have installed additional insulation
- ☐ Use natural lighting
- ☐ Use lighting sensors to turn on/off lights
- ☐ Use occupancy sensors to turn on/off lights
- ☐ Generate electricity from photovoltaic solar panels
- ☐ Have a solar water heating system
- ☐ Generate electricity from a wind turbine
- ☐ Purchase **EnergyStar** computers, appliances, etc. (www.energystar.gov)
- ☐ Have thermal-rated windows and insulation
- ☐ Use of directional (downward-facing) lighting in parking areas and other outdoor areas
- ☐ Purchase “Green Tags” or “Renewable Energy Certificates” to support new renewable energy resources (www.green-e.org)
- ☐ Use LEED criteria when developing new buildings (www.usgbc.org)
- ☐ Achieved LEED certification as a _____ building
- ☐ Are working to achieve LEED-EB (existing building) certification through operational changes and renovations
- ☐ Use fuel efficient vehicles or hybrid vehicles
- ☐ Use **EnergyStar's** Benchmarking Tools for the Hospitality Industry (www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=hospitality.bus_hospitality)
- ☐ OTHER specifics related to Energy Conservation & Efficiency:

Green Conferences & Events – we pledge that we:

- ☐ Include availability of "green meetings/conferences" in marketing packages (see fact sheet on "Environmentally-Responsible Conferences & Events": www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/lodging/eventplanning.html.)

Please list standard “green” activities for conferences and events:

OTHER Creative / Common-Sense Ideas – Let Us Know About Them!

FACILITY INFORMATION

Facility Name:			
Address:			
Website:			
Contact Name:			
E-Mail:		Phone:	

What type of facility are you? Please provide a 1-2 sentence objective description of your facility.

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Why did your facility decide to *Go Green*? Please limit to 1-2 sentences

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☐ **Logo & 2 Pictures!** Please email us your logo and 2 pictures that you would like for us to include in your profile.

Complete this checklist and email it to us at viriniagreen@deq.virginia.gov

You may also print the completed application and Mail it to:

Virginia Green Program
Virginia DEQ Office of Pollution Prevention
PO Box 1105 Richmond, VA 23240-1105
804-698-4545

Thank you for voluntarily committing to minimize your impact on the environment!!

Virginia Green is a partnership program supported by

